REMARKS

STATUS OF CLAIMS

Claims 1-33 are pending.

Claims 1-33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bowe et al (hereinafter "Bowe") (U.S. Publication No. 2003/0093678 A1) in view of Spain et al (hereinafter "Spain") (U.S. Patent No. 7,058,811 B2).

In accordance with the foregoing, claim 11 is amended without narrowing the claim, and, thus the pending claims remain for reconsideration, which is respectfully requested.

No new matter has been added.

The Examiner's rejections are respectfully traversed.

REQUEST FOR NEW NON-FINAL OFFICE ACTION:

Independent claims 1, 5, 11, 12, 14, 18, 24 and 28 are allegedly unpatentable over Bowe, in view of Spain.

The Office Action, at item 7, rejects claims 1, 5, 11, 12, 14, 18, 24 and 28-33, including all of the independent claims, because, allegedly, Bowe discloses "an information processing method in a center system, said information processing method comprising: receiving a first digital signature for specific data stored in said center system and a request to allow a first user to read said stored specific data, from a terminal of a second user" in the abstract, figure 3 and paragraph 0060.

Applicants respectfully submit that a reference must be applied specifically to the language of each independent claim.

Independent claims 5, 11, 12, 18, 28 do not recite the feature "receiving a first digital signature for specific data stored in said center system and a request to allow a first user to read said stored specific data, from a terminal of a second user." Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of claims 5, 11, 12, 18 and 28 appears to be in error.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request a new, non-final Office Action, if necessary, addressing the features of each and every claim, for example, the claim features "if specific data is received by said center system from a user terminal, generating hash data for said specific data; transmitting said hash data to said user terminal; receiving a digital signature generated from said hash data from said user terminal; and registering said specific data, said hash data and said digital signature into a data storage unit, wherein the registered hash data and the

10

registered digital signature are used to confirm if an authority to access said specific data is granted to an access requestor" as recited, for example, in claim 11.

35 U.S.C. § 103(a) REJECTION:

The Office Action, at page 3, asserts that the abstract and paragraph 0060 of Bowe discloses the claimed "receiving first digital signature for specific data stored in said center system and a request to allow a first user to read said stored specific data, from a terminal of a second user," as recited in claim 1.

Applicants respectfully disagree with the assertion, because Bowe, at paragraph 060 recites:

> FIG. 3 shows a **Verification Request and a Verification Response** according to the present invention. Client 100 can later send the signed object 230 to the server 120 for verification. The server verifies the signature by obtaining the data object 210 and the hash from the first signature 225 from the signed object. The server generates a second hash 310 using the data object and compares the hash from the first signature 225 with the second hash 310. If the signatures match, the signature is valid. The server returns an indicator 320 showing the status of the signature, either valid or invalid.

However, Bowe fails to disclose, either expressly or implicitly, the claimed "receiving first digital signature for specific data stored in said center system and a request to allow a **first user** to read said stored specific data, from a terminal of a **second user**." Namely, Bowe Bowe fails to disclose, either expressly or implicitly, a case where, for example, a second user allows a first user to read stored specific data, because Bowe merely discusses sending a verification request and receiving a verification response.

The Office Action, at pages 4-5, acknowledges that Bowe does not explicitly disclose the claimed "confirming if an authority to give said first user permission to read said specific data is granted to said second user by comparing the received first digital signature with a second digital signature," as recited, for example, in claim 1. The Office Action asserts that Spain, in the abstract, discloses "If the digital signature of the hardware element matches the known value, the user may be grated read and write access to all memory locations within the memory element, including a location in which the hardware address is stored."

Applicant respectfully disagree with the assertion, because although Spain discloses, "comparing the digital signature of the hardware element to a known value," as recited in claim 1 of Spain, as asserted by the Examiner, the digital signature in Spain is decrypted before being compared with the "known value" (see, for example, Spain at steps 440-460 of FIG. 4).

Further, Spain, at column 3, lines 21-23 defines that the "known value" is "the hardware address of the hardware element 110 that has been manipulated by the hash algorithm." Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Spain fails to disclose, either expressly or implicitly, that the "known value" indicates a digital signature itself. That is, Spain fails to disclose, either expressly or implicitly, that claimed "confirming if an authority to give said first user permission to read said specific data is granted to said second user," because the digital signature in Spain is decrypted before being compared with the "known value."

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Spain fails to disclose, either expressly or implicitly, the claimed "confirming if an authority to **give said first user permission to read said specific data** is granted to said second user by **comparing the received first digital signature with a second digital signature, which is registered in a data storage unit so as to correspond to said specific data; and if said first signature and said second signature are identical, performing a processing for enabling said first user to read said stored specific data**," as recited in claim 1.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that a *prima facie* case of obviousness cannot be based upon Bowe and Spain, because there is no evidence that one skilled in the art would have been led to combine Bowe and Spain and modify the combination to include the claimed "receiving a first digital signature for specific data stored in said center system and a request to allow a first user to read said stored specific data, from a terminal of a second user; confirming if an authority to give said first user permission to read said stored specific data is granted to said second user by comparing the received first digital signature with a second digital signature, which is registered in a data storage unit so as to correspond to said stored specific data; and if said first signature and said second signature are identical, performing a processing for enabling said first user to read said stored specific data," as recited in claim 1.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 patentably distinguishes over the cited references.

Furthermore, independent claim 14 is directed to a computer-readable medium storing a program causing an apparatus to perform operations, including:

> receiving a first digital signature for specific data stored in said apparatus and a request to allow a first user to read said stored specific data, from a terminal of a second user;

> confirming if an authority to give said first user permission to read said stored specific data is granted to said second user by comparing the received first digital signature with a second digital signature, which is registered in a data storage unit so as to

correspond to said stored specific data; and

if said first signature and said second signature are
identical, performing a processing for enabling said first user to
read said stored specific data.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 14 patentably distinguishes over
the cited references.

Furthermore, independent claim 24 is directed to a center system, including:

a unit that receives a first digital signature for specific data
stored in said center system and a request to allow a first user to
read said stored specific data, from a terminal of a second user;

a unit that confirms if an authority to give said first user
permission to read said stored specific data is granted to said
second user by comparing the received first digital signature with a
second digital signature, which is registered in a data storage unit
so as to correspond to said stored specific data; and

a unit that performs a processing enabling said first user to
read said stored specific data, if said first signature and said
second signature are identical.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 24 patentably distinguishes over
the cited references.

Independent claim 5 recites "receiving a first digital signature for specific data stored in
said center system from a terminal of a user; confirming if an authority to update said stored
specific data is granted to said user by comparing the received first digital signature with a
second digital signature, which is registered in a data storage unit so as to correspond to said
stored specific data; and if said first digital signature and said second digital signature are
identical, carrying out a setting to allow said user to update said stored specific data".

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that a *prima facie* case of obviousness cannot
be based on Bowe and Spain, because both Bowe, Spain and any combination thereof, fails to
disclose, either expressly or implicitly, the claimed "confirming if an authority to update said
stored specific data is granted to said user by **comparing the received first digital signature
with a second digital signature**, which is registered in a data storage unit so as to correspond
to said stored specific data," as recited in claim 5. Furthermore, Applicants respectfully submit
that there is no evidence that one skilled in the art would have been led to modify Bowe, Spain
or a combination of Bowe and Spain to include the same.

Furthermore, independent claim 18 is directed to a computer-readable medium storing a
program causing an apparatus managing access authority by performing operations, including:

13

receiving a first digital signature for specific data stored in said apparatus from a terminal of a user;

confirming if an authority to update said stored specific data is granted to said user by comparing the received first digital signature with a second digital signature, which is registered in a data storage unit so as to correspond to said stored specific data; and

if said first digital signature and said second digital signature are identical, carrying out a setting to allow said user to update said stored specific data.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 18 patentably distinguishes over the cited references.

Furthermore, independent claim 28 is directed to center system, including:

a unit that receives a first digital signature for specific data stored in said center system from a terminal of a user;

a unit that confirms if an authority to update said stored specific data is granted to said user by comparing the received first digital signature with a second digital signature, which is registered in a data storage unit so as to correspond to said stored specific data; and

a unit that carries out a setting to allow said user to update said stored specific data, if said first digital signature and said second digital signature are identical.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 28 patentably distinguishes over the cited references.

Independent claim 11 recites "if specific data is received by said center system from a user terminal, generating hash data for said specific data; transmitting said hash data to said user terminal; receiving a digital signature generated from said hash data from said user terminal; and registering said specific data, said hash data and said digital signature into a data storage unit, wherein the registered hash data and the registered digital signature are used to confirm if an authority to access said specific data is granted to an access requestor". Applicants respectfully submit that a *prima facie* case of obviousness cannot be based on Bowe and Spain, because both Bowe, Spain and any combination thereof, fails to disclose, either expressly or implicitly, the same.

Independent claim 12 recites "generating a digital signature from hash data, which is stored in a hash storage, for specific data; transmitting an access request including said digital signature as data representing permission to update said specific data to a server; and if said digital signature and a second digital signature, which is registered in said server, for said

specific data are identical, receiving and displaying on a display device, said specific data in a state where updating is enabled, from said server". Applicants respectfully submit that a *prima facie* case of obviousness cannot be based on Bowe and Spain, because both Bowe, Spain and any combination thereof, fails to disclose, either expressly or implicitly, the same.

Dependent claims 2, 15 and 25 recites "transmitting hash data, which is registered in said data storage unit so as to correspond to said stored specific data, and which represents that an authority to read said stored specific data is granted to said first user, to a terminal of said first user". Although the Examiner asserts Bowe, in the abstract, discloses the same, Applicants respectfully disagree with the assertion, because Bowe fails to disclose, either expressly or implicitly, the claimed "transmitting hash data... to a terminal of **said first user**". Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit the claims 2, 15 and 25 patentably distinguish over the cited references.

Other dependent claims recite patentably distinguishing features of their own or are at least patentably distinguishing due their dependence from the independent claims. Withdrawal of the rejection of pending claims and allowance of pending claims is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.
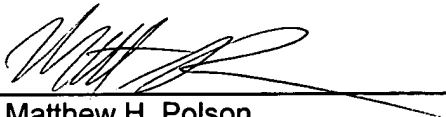
Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

Date: _January 4 2008_   By: _____

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